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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, S/CT, DS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [CE](#) [MV](#)

SUBJECT: Counterterrorism Action Group (CTAG) meeting for Sri Lanka/Maldives

Refs: (A) Colombo - SA/INS 02/06/2004 fax
- (B) State 14279

1. (U) This message is Sensitive but Unclassified -- Please handle accordingly.

2. (SBU) SUMMARY: Mission hosted a local-level CTAG meeting on February 5. Mission representatives briefed the group on USG efforts, and representatives of the other G-8 embassies and Australia and Switzerland also briefed on their efforts. The group agreed on the importance of needs assessment of GSL capabilities and continued information-sharing. END SUMMARY.

3. (U) Per Ref B, Mission hosted a Counterterrorism Action Group (CTAG) meeting for Sri Lanka and the Maldives on February 5. The meeting was well-attended by representatives of local G-8 embassies plus Australia and Switzerland. DAO, RSO, and Polchief represented the U.S.

4. (SBU) Utilizing Ref B points, Polchief reviewed the purpose of the meeting, relating that the U.S. had taken over as Chair of CTAG on January 1 and would be hosting a capital-level meeting of CTAG members on February 20 in Washington. Polchief noted that additional capital-level CTAG meetings would be taking place in 2004 and that Mission would be calling additional local CTAG meetings later in the year.

5. (SBU) Turning to the specifics of USG counterterrorism engagement with Sri Lanka, RSO reviewed past State Department Anti-Terrorism Training (ATA) programs with the Sri Lankan government (GSL) and future plans. RSO noted that an area of increased focus would be community policing. DAO then reviewed Department of Defense counterterrorism programs with the Sri Lankan military. DAO related that these programs included individual and unit training, access to military professional schools, and funded participation in U.S. and multilateral conferences and seminars throughout the South Asia region. Since September 11, 2001, these programs had focused specifically on terrorism and counterterrorism (CT), and all of them had CT or regional security as a major program element. As part of their presentations, RSO and DAO distributed handouts detailing State ATA and DoD programs and plans (see Ref A).

6. (SBU) Meeting participants then went around the table reviewing the extent of their government's counterterrorism engagement with Sri Lanka. Comments included the following:

-- Australia: The Australian DCM said her government was not providing any CT assistance to the GSL. Most of the GoA's assistance was focused on East Asia, SE Asia, and the Pacific region, not South Asia. Australia wanted to engage more regarding Sri Lanka, however.

-- Canada: The Canadian Consular Chief said his government was not providing any direct CT assistance to the GSL. Via the Commonwealth Organization, however, Canada was assisting in some anti-terrorism financing training programs, which Sri Lankans had participated in. Canada was also concerned with immigration issues, which it saw as linked with counterterrorism concerns.

-- European Union: No direct assistance had been provided or was planned for the GSL.

-- France: French Embassy Conoff indicated that his country provided some police training. The GoF was very concerned about immigration issues.

-- Germany: No direct assistance had been provided or was planned for the GSL.

-- Italy: No direct assistance had been provided or was planned for the GSL. The GoI was very concerned about immigration issues, however.

-- Japan: The Japanese Embassy representative related

that the GoJ was committed to helping build the GSL's capacity to combat terrorism. He related that the GoJ had invited small numbers of GSL personnel to export control, immigration, law enforcement, etc., workshops and planned to continue to do so.

-- Russia: The Russian DCM noted that the GoR had signed an anti-terrorism agreement with the GSL at the foreign ministerial-level in April 2001. The two countries also had an agreement (also signed in April 2001) regarding practical CT cooperation, including training and technical support (this accord was between the FSB and the Sri Lankan police). The Russian DCM remarked that the GSL had never requested CT assistance and none had yet been provided by the GoR.

-- Switzerland: No direct assistance had been provided or was planned for the GSL.

-- United Kingdom: The British Embassy Poloff said HMG had held various CT seminars in which Sri Lankans had participated. The Embassy was also involved in police reform issues and might assign an adviser to Sri Lankan police headquarters.

(Note: Other than the U.S. side, none of the other countries represented at the meeting provided handouts.)

17. (SBU) After the presentations concluded, participants engaged in a brief give-and-take regarding CT issues. The Italian DCM stressed that the Maldives was also an area of CT concern for his country given its large tourism industry. Participants agreed to focus more on the Maldives in future discussions. The French Embassy representative noted that airport security was also a concern for his government. The Russian DCM wondered whether GSL representatives should be invited to future meetings. He also wondered whether there should be publicity. Polchief noted that the U.S. Embassy was not planning to publicize the meetings. RSO remarked that perhaps GSL representatives could come to future meetings that dealt with discrete CT subjects. RSO also emphasized the importance of needs assessments and continued information-sharing; participants agreed that these were key priorities. Polchief closed the meeting by underscoring that the U.S. Embassy would be in touch concerning future local-level CTAG meetings and thanked participants for their attendance on short notice.

18. (U) Minimize considered.

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